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# THE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

## *A Brief Summary of Economic Conditions*

ISSUED MONTHLY BY THE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Washington, D. C.

APRIL 1, 1928

Volume 12, No. 4

### SPRING WORK MOVING SLOWLY—SOME CROP SHIFTS PLANNED

The growing season is not so far advanced as was the case a year ago. Preparations for spring planting have been held back over much of the country by storms and cold weather. This is the case even in the South, in marked contrast with last spring. However, the retarding of fruit buds is considered a favorable circumstance.

Last month this bureau received reports from about 50,000 farmers in all parts of the country concerning intended crop acreages for this season. These reports indicated plans to increase the acreage of main crops (not including cotton for which the bureau has no report) about 3 per cent over that harvested last year. The major shifts contemplated are a reduction in the acreage of hard spring wheat, but a material increase in potatoes and tobacco, and some increase in feed grains.

The northern Spring Wheat Belt indicates plans to reduce hard red spring wheat acreage about 8 per cent but to increase durum wheat about 15 per cent and flax 14 per cent. Recent improvement in the market prospects suggests that any great reduction of hard spring wheat acreage in favor of durum might not be the most profitable thing to do.

Potato growers report plans to increase the acreage 12 per cent over last year. If this is carried out and the crop yields up to average, it will be very likely to mean an unfavorable market situation next fall. The largest increase seems to be planned in the East, but the West and South are also talking more potatoes. Potatoes have been a profitable crop for many growers for three years but profits will be jeopardized this year if production is overdone, especially for growers distant from market.

In the case of the feed grains, reports indicate plans to increase slightly the corn acreage, materially increase barley, and slightly decrease oats. It is true that the country's feed requirements are relatively heavy this year due to the large number of hogs and to the fact that improved prices for beef and dairy products have stimulated the use of grain. However, a 24 per cent increase in barley acreage, as contemplated, would raise some questions as to the market situation for that crop next fall.

In general, it appears that the major crops have been profitable enough to maintain their acreages and even induce some expansion this season. This applies to most crops except the horse feeds like timothy hay and oats where demand has permanently dwindled. However, in most important lines of farm production profits are still scaled very close to the line and any marked increase in output usually brings down the price. The evidence suggests that this fact should be borne in mind this spring particularly by growers of potatoes, barley, durum wheat, and certain types of tobacco.

## KEY REGIONS AT A GLANCE

**The East.**—Conditions rather backward as to field work and growth. Region had heavy snow and rains part of last month and generally cold, raw weather during much of March. Some spring grain sown in south but plowing is just beginning in northeastern States. Fruit buds backward and this generally considered favorable. Maple sugar is now in the making. Dairymen beginning to feel some pressure from higher feed prices. Poultrymen report fairly profitable winter.

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**The South.**—Considerably behind last spring as to growing season. Work held up last month by rains and growth retarded by frosts and cold waves. Crop work is going forward now at fair rate. Corn, potatoes, and truck crops planted in large part and are growing in more southern areas. Considerable land prepared for cotton and planting is getting under way around the Gulf territory. Fruit developing slowly; peaches coming into blossom; strawberries ripened slowly but shipments are increasing from Gulf areas. General grain and pasture conditions fair to poor.

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**Corn Belt.**—Field work and growing season backward. Storms and cold weather last month held things up. Winter wheat looking decidedly spotted; much of the late sown will be plowed up in the Ohio Valley. Oat seeding going forward where land could be prepared. Some rather heavy losses reported in lambs and early pigs. Some damage also reported to peach buds though most fruit was so retarded as to be safe. Corn Belt talking slight increase in corn acreage. Some reduction in pig crop considered probable this year.

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**Wheat Belt.**—The western plains territory had much-needed snow and rains last month and wheat that was still alive has begun to respond, though growth is slow. Considerable grain, however, never got sufficient start to weather the drought and freezing and the talk suggests a rather heavy abandonment of wheat acreage. The official report on wheat condition will be issued April 10. In the north there is some disposition to cut hard spring acreage and increase durum wheat and flax. Preparation of land and seeding are in full swing.

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**Range Country.**—Generally favorable reports throughout this region. Snows and rains last month gave ample soil moisture nearly everywhere except in portions of New Mexico. Livestock came through winter in fair to good condition. Lambing in progress with fairly good lamb crop and favorable weather conditions for saving it. Stock moving to summer ranges in south. Cows high in price and cattlemen generally optimistic.

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**Pacific Coast.**—Spring work going forward rapidly. Seeding of grains and early crops well along in north. Apricots, peaches, and cherries in bloom. Sheep shearing in progress. Weather and growing conditions likewise favorable in California except that certain areas are too dry. Spring truck crops planted, for the most part, and shipments of early truck continue in south. Valencia orange harvest will be under way shortly.

# INTENDED PLANTINGS IN 1928 IN PER CENT OF ACREAGE GROWN FOR HARVEST IN 1927

Crop	United States	North Atlantic	North Central	South Atlantic	South Central	Western
	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Corn.....	102. 8	105. 2	101. 7	101. 9	106. 1	101. 7
All spring wheat.....	98. 5	92. 0	98. 3	-----	-----	99. 1
Durum wheat.....	<sup>1</sup> 114. 9	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Other spring wheat.....	<sup>1</sup> 92. 1	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Oats.....	98. 6	102. 7	99. 2	91. 3	90. 3	107. 2
Barley.....	123. 9	111. 3	128. 2	111. 9	91. 6	116. 1
Flaxseed.....	114. 3	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Rice.....	88. 7	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Grain sorghums.....	102. 3	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Potatoes.....	111. 9	110. 4	113. 5	112. 4	115. 0	107. 2
Sweet potatoes and yams.....	105. 5	95. 0	106. 1	103. 3	107. 6	100. 0
Tobacco.....	115. 7	102. 5	121. 3	109. 9	131. 9	-----
Peanuts.....	112. 0	-----	-----	107. 8	119. 3	-----
Tame hay.....	98. 6	97. 6	97. 6	100. 0	102. 8	100. 0

<sup>1</sup> Includes only the 4 States of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana.

The combined acreage intended to be planted to the principal feed grains—corn, oats, barley, and grain sorghums—points to an increase of about 3 per cent over the acreage harvested in 1927. The present plans of farmers indicate an increase of almost 3 per cent in the United States corn acreage, nearly 24 per cent increase in barley acreage, more than 2 per cent in grain sorghum acreage, but 1.4 per cent decrease in oats acreage.

The intended increase in corn acreage is quite general in all parts of the country, the South Central group of States showing the greatest increase, 6 per cent, while the Corn Belt States plan less than 2 per cent increase. As compared with this increase in corn acreage, the Corn Belt plans about 1 per cent reduction in the oats acreage. Farmers in the South Atlantic and the South Central groups of States indicate a reduction in the acreage of oats of about 10 per cent from that harvested last year, due mainly to loss of fall-sown oats. The intended expansion in the barley acreage amounts to more than 28 per cent in the North Central States and 16 per cent in the 11 Western States.

The acreage intended for hay in 1928 is reported at 1.4 per cent less than harvested last year. The decreases of over 2 per cent are shown in the North Atlantic States and in the North Central group of States, where the production was unusually large last year, while in the South Central group an increase of nearly 3 per cent is contemplated.

Tobacco growers collectively have indicated an intention to increase their acreage approximately 16 per cent this year over the acreage harvested in 1927.



## AVERAGE PRICES OF FARM PRODUCTS RECEIVED BY PRODUCERS

Actual prices received by producers at local farm markets as reported to the division of crop and livestock estimates of this bureau. Average of reports covering the United States, weighted according to relative importance of district and State.

	5-yr. av. Aug., 1909- July, 1914	Febru- ary average 1910- 1914	Febru- ary, 1927	Janu- ary, 1928	Febru- ary, 1928
Cotton, per lb.....cents..	12. 4	12. 3	11. 5	18. 6	17. 0
Corn, per bu.....do.....	64. 2	60. 1	66. 5	75. 2	79. 0
Wheat.....do.....	88. 4	89. 2	122. 8	115. 2	116. 2
Hay, per ton.....dollars..	11. 87	12. 02	13. 64	10. 60	10. 24
Potatoes, per bu.....cents..	69. 7	66. 3	134. 1	93. 6	96. 2
Oats, per bu.....do.....	39. 9	39. 8	43. 4	49. 3	51. 3
Beef cattle, per 100 lbs.dollars..	5. 22	5. 11	6. 60	8. 48	8. 72
Hogs, per 100 lbs.....do.....	7. 23	7. 12	11. 19	7. 81	7. 62
Eggs, per doz.....cents..	21. 5	23. 9	29. 0	38. 2	29. 1
Butter, per lb.....do.....	25. 5	26. 6	43. 7	45. 2	43. 9
Butterfat, per lb.....do.....			46. 8	48. 5	46. 0
Wool, per lb.....do.....	17. 7	18. 5	31. 1	33. 2	34. 4
Veal calves, per 100 lbs.dollars..	6. 75	6. 77	10. 10	10. 88	11. 30
Lambs, per 100 lbs.....do.....	5. 91	5. 95	10. 84	11. 34	11. 90
Horses, each.....do.....	142. 00	143. 00	77. 00	77. 00	82. 00

Of the grains, corn leads in the magnitude of price change, advancing 5 per cent during the month ending February 15. The advance in the price of corn was general over the United States and is probably due to smaller receipts of corn during the first half of February, due in a measure to the unfavorable weather and road conditions for marketing. The price increase may be partially due also to the increased feeding demand resulting from the increased number of hogs on farms, as indicated by the January livestock report. The corn-hog ratio for the United States declined from 10.3 to 9.6 and for Iowa from 10.6 to 9.7.

Wool advanced again during February. On February 15 the relative farm price was 193 per cent of the 1910-1914 average. This is the highest the price has been since March, 1926. The advancing farm price is probably a reflection of the low stocks and the continuation of a good demand situation and some doubt as to the results of the Australian clip.

Cotton prices declined 9 per cent during the period from January 15 to February 15. The farm price on February 15 was 32 per cent above February 15, 1927, and only slightly below February, 1926. The decline in the farm price has been continuous since the peak was reached in September.

The farm price of cattle continued to advance during the period from January 15 to February 15. The liquidation which has taken place was reflected in the decline in the numbers on farms, as indicated by the livestock report in January, and has resulted in a reduction in marketing. The apparent tendency of farmers to build up their herds and the consequent reduction in marketing cattle is probably one of the principal factors influencing the price rise.

## PRICE INDEXES FOR FEBRUARY, 1928

Farm products figures from this bureau; commodity groups from Bureau of Labor Statistics (latter shown to nearest whole number). Shows year ago and latest available month.

## FARM PRODUCTS

[Prices at the farm; August, 1909–July, 1914=100]

	Febru- ary, 1927	Janu- ary, 1928	Febru- ary, 1928	Month's trend
Cotton.....	93	150	137	Lower.
Corn.....	104	117	123	Higher.
Wheat.....	139	130	131	Do.
Hay.....	115	89	86	Lower.
Potatoes.....	192	134	138	Higher.
Beef cattle.....	127	163	168	Do.
Hogs.....	155	108	105	Lower.
Eggs.....	135	178	135	Do.
Butter.....	171	177	172	Do.
Wool.....	175	187	193	Higher.

## COMMODITY GROUPS

[Wholesale prices; 1926=100]

	Febru- ary, 1927	Janu- ary, 1928	Febru- ary, 1928	Month's trend
Farm products.....	95	106	105	Lower.
Foods.....	96	99	99	Unchanged.
Hides and leather products.....	100	121	124	Higher.
Textile products.....	95	97	97	Unchanged.
Fuel and lighting.....	96	81	81	Do.
Metals and metal products.....	98	98	98	Do.
Building materials.....	96	91	91	Do.
Chemicals and drugs.....	98	96	96	Do.
House-furnishing goods.....	98	99	98	Lower.
All commodities.....	96	96	96	Unchanged.

## GENERAL TREND OF WAGES AND PRICES

[1910-1914=100]

Year and month	General wage level <sup>1</sup>	Farm wages <sup>2</sup>	Retail price of food <sup>3</sup>	Wholesale price of food <sup>3</sup>	Wholesale price, all commodities <sup>4</sup>
1910		97	96	100	103
1911		97	95	96	95
1912		101	101	103	101
1913		104	103	99	102
1914	<sup>5</sup> 100	101	106	101	100
1915	101	102	104	104	103
1916	114	112	117	120	129
1917	129	140	151	166	180
1918	160	176	174	187	198
1919	185	206	192	205	210
1920	222	239	210	218	230
1921	203	150	158	143	150
1922	197	146	146	137	152
1923	214	166	151	143	156
1924	218	166	150	143	152
1925	223	168	162	156	162
1926	229	171	166	152	154
1927	231	170	160	148	149
February—					
1921	211		163	150	163
1922	190		146	134	144
1923	204		146	140	160
1924	218		152	142	154
1925	220		156	156	164
1926	225		166	152	158
1927					
January	232	162	164	149	150
February	231		161	147	149
March	234		159	146	148
April	230	166	158	146	147
May	230		160	147	147
June	230		163	145	146
July	228	172	158	144	147
August	231		157	145	149
September	233		159	149	152
October	231	175	161	152	153
November	226		161	153	152
December	233		161	151	152
1928					
January	230	161	160		
February	230		156		

<sup>1</sup> Average weekly earnings, New York State factories.<sup>2</sup> Index based on both monthly and daily wages.<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics index numbers converted to 1910-1914 base.<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>5</sup> June.



## GENERAL TREND OF PRICES AND PURCHASING POWER

[On 5-year base, August, 1909–July, 1914=100]

Year and month	Index numbers of farm prices							Wholesale prices of non-agricultural commodities	Relative purchasing power of farmer's product
	Grains	Fruits and vegetables	Meat animals	Dairy products	Poultry products	Cotton and cotton-seed	All groups 30 items		
1910-----	104	91	103	100	104	113	103	102	101
1911-----	96	106	87	97	91	101	95	96	99
1912-----	106	110	95	103	101	87	99	100	99
1913-----	92	92	108	100	101	97	100	105	95
1914-----	103	100	112	100	105	85	102	97	105
1915-----	120	83	104	98	103	78	100	101	99
1916-----	126	123	120	102	116	119	117	138	85
1917-----	217	202	173	125	157	187	176	182	97
1918-----	226	162	202	152	185	245	200	188	107
1919-----	231	189	206	173	206	247	209	199	105
1920-----	231	249	173	188	222	248	205	241	85
1921-----	112	148	108	148	161	101	116	167	69
1922-----	105	152	113	134	139	156	124	168	74
1923-----	114	136	106	148	145	216	135	171	79
1924-----	129	124	109	134	147	211	134	162	83
1925-----	156	160	139	137	161	177	147	165	89
1926-----	129	189	146	136	156	122	136	161	85
1927-----	128	155	139	138	141	128	131	152	86
February—									
1920-----	242	252	184	194	236	295	221	244	91
1921-----	136	127	119	165	185	89	128	185	69
1922-----	102	173	108	134	140	128	118	156	76
1923-----	114	122	110	151	151	215	136	178	76
1924-----	113	123	102	150	157	247	136	166	82
1925-----	178	131	126	134	166	183	146	167	88
1926-----	140	218	146	143	145	142	143	164	87
1927-----	122	142	143	143	145	94	127	155	82
1927									
September----	134	145	142	135	143	179	140	152	92
October-----	128	138	145	139	167	169	139	151	92
November-----	120	136	141	141	189	162	137	151	91
December-----	123	141	138	145	195	153	137	151	91
1928									
January-----	125	144	138	145	177	152	137	151	91
February-----	128	153	139	145	144	141	135	-----	-----

NOTE.—The Bureau of Labor Statistics having changed its method of compiling the wholesale price index, the series showing relative purchasing power in the column at right of this page has been discontinued temporarily. It is probable that a new index will be published beginning next month.

## THE TREND OF MOVEMENT TO MARKET

Figures show wheat, corn, hogs, cattle, sheep receipts at primary markets; butter receipts at five markets, compiled by this bureau.

Year and month	Receipts					
	Wheat	Corn	Hogs	Cattle	Sheep	Butter
<b>Total:</b>	<i>1,000 bushels</i>	<i>1,000 bushels</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000 pounds</i>
1920-----	332, 314	210, 332	42, 121	22, 197	23, 538	402, 755
1921-----	435, 606	340, 908	41, 107	19, 787	24, 168	468, 150
1922-----	413, 106	378, 598	44, 068	23, 218	22, 364	526, 714
1923-----	386, 430	271, 858	55, 330	23, 211	22, 025	545, 380
1924-----	482, 007	278, 719	55, 414	23, 695	22, 201	587, 477
1925-----	346, 381	223, 604	43, 929	24, 067	22, 100	574, 489
1926-----	362, 876	234, 873	39, 772	23, 872	23, 868	572, 935
1927-----	455, 991	241, 245	41, 411	22, 763	23, 935	581, 592
<b>February:</b>						
1920-----	16, 397	24, 251	3, 422	1, 480	1, 416	24, 019
1921-----	21, 384	26, 026	4, 009	1, 190	1, 516	23, 962
1922-----	21, 851	59, 558	3, 613	1, 416	1, 400	32, 309
1923-----	21, 533	31, 901	4, 492	1, 427	1, 366	33, 611
1924-----	20, 165	44, 689	5, 335	1, 457	1, 412	40, 221
1925-----	18, 493	20, 833	4, 558	1, 530	1, 388	35, 181
1926-----	15, 923	25, 718	3, 372	1, 551	1, 486	39, 507
1927-----	19, 462	24, 499	3, 308	1, 555	1, 501	38, 375
1927						
July-----	52, 996	14, 724	3, 046	1, 547	1, 676	67, 282
August-----	78, 909	17, 023	3, 041	2, 065	2, 209	57, 446
September-----	79, 962	21, 259	2, 565	1, 988	2, 848	42, 234
October-----	71, 696	19, 132	3, 039	2, 635	3, 587	38, 301
November-----	42, 394	15, 924	3, 666	2, 346	1, 896	33, 607
December-----	23, 903	36, 777	4, 209	1, 691	1, 609	33, 687
1928						
January-----	22, 313	37, 116	5, 306	1, 771	1, 705	42, 271
February-----	21, 403	44, 453	5, 267	1, 516	1, 669	41, 140

The movement of wheat to market during February was somewhat greater and of corn decidedly heavier than during the same month last year. In the case of corn this reflects last year's crop distribution which made it necessary to move large supplies from the West to the deficient eastern territory.

February movement of cattle about like recent years; sheep and lambs substantially heavier than recent years.

## THE TREND OF EXPORT MOVEMENT

Compiled from the Department of Commerce reports by division of statistical research of this bureau.

Year and month	Wheat, <sup>1</sup> including flour	Tobacco (leaf)	Bacon, <sup>2</sup> hams, and shoulders	Lard	Total <sup>3</sup> meats	Cotton running bales <sup>4</sup>
Total:	1,000 bushels	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 bales
1920---	311, 601	467, 662	821, 922	612, 250	1, 043, 500	6, 111
1921---	359, 021	515, 353	647, 680	868, 942	786, 280	6, 385
1922---	235, 307	430, 908	631, 452	766, 950	733, 832	6, 015
1923---	175, 190	474, 500	828, 890	1, 035, 382	958, 472	5, 224
1924---	241, 454	546, 555	637, 980	944, 095	729, 832	6, 653
1925---	138, 784	468, 471	467, 459	688, 829	547, 361	8, 362
1926---	193, 861	478, 769	351, 591	698, 971	428, 613	8, 916
1927---	222, 792	506, 751	237, 798	681, 303	302, 936	9, 198
February—						
1290---	10, 832	39, 764	100, 109	36, 645	125, 634	634
1921---	23, 279	41, 735	47, 485	91, 841	61, 486	484
1922---	11, 231	25, 846	56, 003	75, 520	62, 647	326
1923---	12, 473	24, 380	64, 488	89, 055	75, 023	355
1924---	10, 326	38, 414	81, 108	99, 910	90, 461	470
1925---	11, 784	23, 806	48, 041	60, 363	55, 438	792
1926---	4, 742	47, 147	37, 187	65, 356	45, 292	545
1927---	8, 997	46, 840	19, 476	49, 884	24, 313	979
1927						
July-----	12, 100	28, 229	24, 040	46, 972	30, 043	372
August-----	28, 347	27, 817	16, 841	50, 816	23, 123	322
September -	39, 765	38, 394	23, 952	59, 736	30, 213	620
October----	36, 347	47, 044	16, 322	50, 355	21, 418	1, 113
November--	21, 344	54, 307	13, 744	49, 636	17, 982	984
December--	12, 211	47, 644	19, 947	62, 855	24, 453	745
1928						
January----	11, 809	42, 600	22, 212	70, 660	27, 102	712
February---	6, 725	41, 355	22, 175	79, 872	27, 850	614

<sup>1</sup> Wheat flour is converted on a basis of 4.7 bushels of grain equal 1 barrel of flour.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Cumberland and Wiltshire sides.

<sup>3</sup> Includes fresh, canned, and pickled beef, bacon, hams, and shoulders; fresh, canned and pickled pork; fresh mutton and lamb.

<sup>4</sup> Excludes linters.

## GENERAL BUSINESS INDICATORS RELATED TO AGRICULTURE

	Febru- ary, 1927	Janu- ary, 1928	Febru- ary, 1928	Month's trend
PRODUCTION				
Pig iron, daily (thousand tons)-----	105	93	100	Increase.
Bituminous coal (million tons)-----	53	44	41	Decrease.
Steel ingots (thousand long tons)-----	3, 782	3, 961	4, 015	Increase.
CONSUMPTION				
Cotton, by mills (thousand bales)----	590	582	574	Decrease.
Unfilled orders, Steel Corporation (thousand tons).	3, 597	4, 276	4, 398	Increase.
Building contracts in 27 Northeast- ern States (million dollars).	336	364	405	Do.
Hogs slaughtered (thousands)-----	2, 006	3, 443	3, 457	Do.
Cattle slaughtered (thousands)-----	1, 012	1, 080	961	Decrease.
Sheep slaughtered (thousands)-----	829	994	945	Do.
MOVEMENTS				
Bank clearings (New York) (billion dollars).	23	31	27	Do.
Car loadings (thousands)-----	3, 802	3, 448	3, 590	Increase.
Mail-order sales (million dollars)----	35	37	38	Do.
Employees, New York State factories (thousands).	491	457	462	Do.
Average price 25 industrial stocks (dollars).	181	242	239	Decrease.
Interest rate (4-6 months' paper, New York) (per cent).	3. 87	3. 88	4. 03	Increase.
Retail food price index (Department of Labor). <sup>1</sup>	156	155	152	Lower.
Wholesale price index (Department of Labor). <sup>2</sup>	96	96	96	Unchanged.

<sup>1</sup> 1913=100.<sup>2</sup> 1926=100.

One who attempts to gain an idea of the present trend of business activity by merely reading the opinions of observers is likely to be puzzled. On the one hand, well-informed men point to the easy credit conditions, to the increasing production in iron and steel and in the automobile industry, and to the remarkably sustained volume of building construction. These men see a generally improving business situation and moderately good prospects ahead.

On the other hand, less optimistic observers are talking about rather widespread unemployment, are noting such indicators as car loadings below last year, and give weight to the dissatisfaction and relative inactivity which exist in various important industrial lines.

Probably the general business situation is still such that it will not influence farmers to any material change in their production plans for 1928.



## THE EGG AND POULTRY SITUATION

Egg markets have shown but little change in price during March, only a slight tendency toward declines being noted. Other factors, however, such as receipts, storage movement, and production are in a materially different situation than a month ago. Many of these changes are, of course, seasonal.

The chief interest on the markets continues to be the new storage deal now well under way. While movement started somewhat earlier than usual, especially on the Pacific coast, the general rate of movement has been slower than a year ago and holdings on April 1 are seen as considerably short of April 1, 1927. The slower movement has been largely due to lighter receipts at most markets and to some undesirability in the quality of arrivals for storage use. Late in the month, with heavier receipts, movement into the warehouse became heavier but at no time equaled movement a year earlier.

It is apparent that production has been late getting under way this year and that until the latter part of March was quite light for the season. Before the close of the month, however, the lay was beginning to approach normal but being several weeks late was still considerably behind last year.

Prices have been rather steady in spite of the increase in receipts and the resultant slight downward tendency in values. The undertone of the market has been firm and prices have consistently held above a year ago; but while confidence prevails for the most part there is some feeling that the storing level is too high. Of course, it is true that an April shortage is no indication of an August shortage, and while the outlook is for prices above last year the deal has just started and there is still a possibility for a change to a slightly lower level.

The poultry market has been a little irregular but gradually strengthened as the month advanced, and the tone at the close was firm. Live poultry has moved rather irregularly, but the coming of Easter and the Passover season is expected to result in improved demand. The poultry storage situation may be considered as fairly satisfactory, although demand has been none too active; but with the increasing strength owners are holding firmly and the immediate outlook is favorable.

C. E. ECKLES,  
*Division of Dairy and Poultry Products, B. A. E.*



**SUMMARY OF DAIRY STATISTICS**

[Million pounds, 000,000 omitted]

**PRODUCTION**

	February			January to February, inclusive		
	1928	1927	Per cent change	1928	1927	Per cent change
Creamery butter.....	96	93	+ 3. 9	201	197	+ 1. 8
Farm butter.....	33	33	- 1. 1	69	70	- 0. 9
Total butter....	130	126	+ 2. 5	270	267	+ 1. 1
Cheese.....	24	23	+ 4. 0	48	45	+ 7. 7
Condensed and evaporated milk.....	131	118	+ 11. 0	234	225	+ 3. 7
Total milk equivalent....	3, 305	3, 195	+ 3. 4	6, 763	6, 625	+ 2. 1

**APPARENT CONSUMPTION**

[Including production, changes in stocks, and net imports or exports]

Butter.....	143	137	+ 4. 5	303	294	+ 3. 0
Cheese.....	36	37	- 1. 0	74	72	+ 1. 7
Condensed and evaporated milk.....	150	121	+ 23. 7	267	241	+ 10. 7
Total milk equivalent....	3, 762	3, 563	+ 5. 6	7, 776	7, 516	+ 3. 5

T. R. PIRTLE,

*Division of Dairy and Poultry Products, B. A. E.***COLD STORAGE SITUATION**

[March 1 holdings (shows nearest million; i. e., 000,000 omitted)]

Commodity	5-year average	Year ago	Month ago	March 1, 1928
Creamery butter.....pounds..	16	8	28	14
American cheese.....do.....	34	39	42	37
Case eggs.....cases.....	<sup>1</sup> 49	<sup>1</sup> 92	<sup>1</sup> 26	<sup>1</sup> 65
Total poultry.....pounds..	112	130	118	104
Total beef.....do.....	99	88	72	64
Total pork.....do.....	762	672	656	884
Lard.....do.....	87	77	84	121
Lamb and mutton.....do.....	4	4	4	4
Total meats.....do.....	938	823	796	1, 023

<sup>1</sup> Three figures omitted.

## THE DAIRY SITUATION

In the light of usual developments during March, butter markets of the past month have been notably steady. This is particularly true as comparison is made with March of last year, when, as it will be remembered, prices first broke sharply and then came back for a more than complete recovery. The spring of 1927 was, however, unusual throughout from a butter-price standpoint, with an April average higher by several cents than any April since 1920. During the past 30 days butter markets have been more like 1925 than any other recent year, except for being some 2 to 3 cents higher, and even in the earlier part of the year the general trend was somewhat similar. The time is approaching when a seasonal price decline may be expected, and while it is a matter of conjecture as to when this decline will begin in earnest and how low prices will go this year, it is safe to assume that the April average will be lower than March, for that is the rule rather than the exception. To that extent we can look ahead. The difference between March and April price averages has been close to 4 cents during the past five years.

In another month there should be some evidence of what the new season promises both in the matter of prices and production. In the meantime current production, together with the cleaning out of remaining stocks of storage butter, will take care of consumptive demand. Butter stocks are already down to an amount which in itself is of little consequence. Estimating on the basis of weekly reports covering a large number of storage points, there are probably less than 10,000,000 pounds of butter left in storage now, and the outward movement is quite satisfactory. In connection with storage reserves, it may be noted that cheese stocks continue to show a shortage as compared with last year, despite which the out-of-storage movement the past few weeks has been heavier than a year ago. A heavier movement also applies to condensed and evaporated milk stocks, which adds an element of strength to the market on these commodities, since total stocks were still quite heavy according to the March 1 report. This gave total stocks held by manufacturers as 119,000,000 pounds, a reduction under February 1 of 28,000,000 pounds as compared with an average reduction of but 8,000,000 pounds.

Some increase in dairy production is taking place, although trade reports covering the first half of March indicate that the increase is as yet small. Total United States butter production during February is estimated as 96,768,000 pounds, an increase over February last year of 1.87 per cent. Condensed and evaporated milk production in February was about 10 per cent heavier than last year. Receipts of cheese at Wisconsin warehouse points indicate that production of American-type cheese is running about 4 per cent heavier than last year and has been since January 1. On the whole, therefore, production is a little heavier than it was in the early part of 1927.

Foreign butter prices have been such as to further preclude the possibility of imports, and no incoming shipments of any consequence have come in, nor is any talk heard of forthcoming shipments. On the other hand, it is reported that a small quantity of foreign butter which had been held in bond at New York was recently returned to London.

L. M. DAVIS,  
*Division of Dairy and Poultry Products, B. A. E.*

## THE GRAIN MARKET SITUATION

The grain market developed a decidedly firmer tone during the past month. Wheat prices advanced about 5 cents per bushel while prices of the principal feed grains reached the highest point on the crop to date. Prospects that the world requirements for bread grains will more nearly equal the surplus in the principal countries than earlier estimates indicated, together with unfavorable conditions in the soft winter wheat area, strengthened the wheat market. A continued active demand for feed grains with the smaller surplus available for the remainder of the season was principally responsible for the advance in corn, oats, barley, and grain sorghum prices.

From the latest information available, the supply of wheat in the principal exporting countries appears somewhat smaller than at this time a year ago. Stocks in the United States, including the amount on farms, in country mills and elevators, and in store in the principal markets are only about 7,000,000 bushels larger than a year ago. The surplus in Canada which at the 1st of March totaled about 135,000,000 bushels is about 32,000,000 bushels more than on March 1 a year ago. This North American surplus, however, is more than offset by the smaller supplies in the Southern Hemisphere, which are about 50,000,000 bushels less than last season at this time. Last year Russia supplied about 40,000,000 bushels of wheat during the crop season, but shipments for the current season to date have amounted to a little over 5,000,000 bushels, and there is little likelihood of any great amount of wheat being available for export from that country during the remainder of the season. Offerings from the Danubian countries have also been smaller this season.

In addition to these smaller supplies in exporting countries the quality of a large percentage of the grain is rather poor, particularly in Canada, which will further reduce the effective supply of bread grains for the remainder of the season.

Total world shipments since July 1 have been below the record shipments for the same period last season, but European imports are apparently being readily absorbed, so that with the poor quality of much of the native wheat in Europe continued large takings from exporting countries may be expected. The scarcity of bread grains and the high prices prevailing for barley, corn, and mill feeds in Europe have increased the demand for low quality wheat for feed, according to trade reports. Indications are, therefore, that the world's stocks of wheat at the 1st of July are likely to be at least no larger than at the beginning of the present crop year.

The winter wheat acreage in Europe reported to date is above that of last year, but from present indications abandonment may be heavier than usual in France, Germany, and Poland. With the possibility of winter killing to offset the increased acreage sown, average conditions until harvest would indicate a crop somewhat below last year's.

While no definite estimate will be made by the department until May of the abandonment of winter wheat in the United States, information received to date indicates considerably more winter killing than usual in the Ohio Valley, where soft red winter wheat is produced. As there was an increase of about 10 per cent in the acreage seeded to winter wheat last fall, the acreage left for harvest may not be materially different from that harvested last year, even



should the abandonment be equal to the 21.6 per cent which occurred in 1925. Should the department's report of April 10 show a low condition of winter wheat, it is a fair indication that yields will not be up to the average and that abandonment will be heavy.

Notwithstanding the unfavorable prospects for winter wheat at the present time, farmers have reported an intention to decrease acreage of all spring wheat about 1.5 per cent from the acreage harvested last year. In the four principal spring wheat States—Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Montana—there is an indicated decrease of about 8 per cent in hard red spring wheat and an intended increase of about 15 per cent in durum wheat, which if carried out would produce with average yields about as much durum wheat as last season, when yields were about 2 bushels per acre above the average. On the other hand, the indicated total acreage of spring wheat, excluding durum, with average yields would produce a crop of about 178,000,000 bushels, or about 65,000,000 bushels smaller than last year.

At prevailing prices it would appear that hard spring wheat with average yields would be a more profitable crop than durum wheat next season except in those sections where the average yield of durum wheat more than offsets the price differential between hard red spring and durum wheat.

Present prospects of more favorable crop conditions and larger crops in competing countries indicate little prospect of any increase in takings of United States durum wheat for the coming season. Acreage in North Africa has been increased about 2.2 per cent and prospects for the new crop are generally favorable. Marketings of durum wheat in Canada indicate a marked upward trend in production, and with favorable planting conditions an increased production is probable in that country again this year.

#### CONSUMPTION OF CORN LARGER THAN LAST YEAR

A rapid disappearance of this season's corn crop was indicated by stocks of corn on farms March 1. While the total supply of corn at the 1st of November was nearly 40,000,000 bushels larger than a year ago, stocks on farms and in commercial channels at the 1st of March were about 120,000,000 bushels less than on March 1, 1927, which would indicate that considerably more corn had been used during the period March to November than for the same period last season. The amount available for the remainder of the season, therefore, will be materially smaller than last year.

Farm work is now restricting marketings and receipts have become smaller. Feeders and industries have been very active buyers, but elevator interests have also taken good amounts, and stocks in the markets have been increased until they are now but little smaller than the relatively large amount in store a year ago. The increased feeding demand can be attributed principally to the increased number of hogs on farms. At the 1st of January it was estimated that there were about 4,500,000 head more hogs on farms than at the 1st of January, 1927. Marketings since that time, however, have been unusually heavy, receipts at the principal markets during February being 59 per cent larger than for the corresponding month last year. A considerable number of pigs weighing from 100 to 130 pounds are also being marketed, which may reduce the demand for corn during the remainder of the season.

Farmers are intending to increase their corn acreage nearly 3 per cent this season. The intended increase is quite general in all parts of the country, the South Central group of States showing an increase of about 6 per cent. An increase of less than 2 per cent is indicated in the Corn Belt States, where a reduction of about 1 per cent in the oats acreage is shown. Planting intentions in the Ohio Valley are much less settled than in an ordinary year because of the uncertainty as to the damage to the winter wheat crop in that area. Reports indicate that farmers are planning to replace whatever wheat acreage is abandoned with corn, oats, barley, and spring wheat.

*Oats.*—About 130,000,000 bushels less oats were available on farms and in market stocks at the 1st of March than a year ago. These smaller supplies have been reflected for some time in the light market offerings and the steady advance in price. Prices of oats in general this season, however, have not been satisfactory to growers and a reduction of about 1.4 per cent in acreage is intended this year, according to reports to the department. In the North Central States, where nearly three-fourths of the crop is grown, a reduction of only 0.8 per cent is indicated. Smaller acreages are intended in Ohio, Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota, but increased acreages in Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska.

*Barley.*—The record barley crop this season was reflected in larger stocks at the 1st of March than a year ago. Total stocks on farms and in the principal markets, however, were only about 20,000,000 bushels larger than last season, which would indicate increased domestic disappearance in addition to the materially increased exports.

The unusual demand for barley has resulted from an active export demand, increased feeding requirements in the North Central States before the new corn crop was available, and to supplement the smaller oats supply.

If farmers carry out their intention to increase their barley acreage nearly 24 per cent this spring, it would result in an increase of more than 2,250,000 acres over last year's seedings of nearly 9,500,000 acres, from which a record crop of over 265,000,000 bushels of barley was produced. While last year's record crop was caused in part by unusually good yields, which may not occur again this season, a yield equal to the average of the past 10 years on the intended acreage will produce about 295,000,000 bushels, which would be over 30,000,000 bushels more barley than was harvested this season.

The 1927 crop was considerably in excess of domestic requirements, and the unusual situation of a record crop selling at relatively high prices was brought about by the active demand for United States barley as a result of the small supply of feed grains in Europe. It is improbable that the European supply of feed grains for next year will be so small as this season, and there is also little prospect of any material increase in domestic requirements.

*Flax.*—The flax market strengthened during the month both in the United States and Argentina. The domestic market was influenced by the higher prices of other grains, while continued liberal takings of Argentine flax by continental European countries caused a firmer market situation at Buenos Aires.



The slow demand for linseed oil in the United States during the past few months has somewhat restricted crushings and takings of Argentine seed. With the heavier European takings, however, it now seems probable that competition from foreign seed when the 1928 domestic crop is ready for market may not be materially greater than last season, notwithstanding the record Argentine crop now being marketed.

An increase of about 14 per cent in flax acreage is planned this spring, according to reports to the department. Yields equal to the good outturn last season on such an acreage would produce about 30,000,000 bushels. This would still be well within the 40,000,000 bushels required for domestic consumption during recent years. With yields equal only to the average for the past 10 years, production would amount to about 25,000,000 bushels, or about 15,000,000 bushels short of domestic requirements. With average yields, flax would probably still be relatively more profitable than oats, barley, or durum wheat in areas where flax normally competes with these grains.

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#### POTATOES AND TRUCK CROPS

The schedule for southern vegetable crops and strawberries is back to about normal this year, though it seems late compared with the very early spring of 1927. Only about half as many new potatoes, one-fourth as many strawberries, and one-fifth as many tomatoes were being shipped in mid-March as during the same period last year. Imports of tomatoes, however, were nearly as heavy as last spring. Several hundred carloads of Texas onions had moved by April 1, 1927, but shipments of the present season are just getting started. With heavier plantings of most truck crops except cantaloupes, it is likely that shipments will come on with a rush during the next two or three months, causing some overlapping of shipping movements from competing mid-season producing sections, as happened in May and June two years ago.

*Potatoes.*—Acreage of potatoes in the early States is only about 6 per cent greater than last year. If supplies are reduced and delayed by continued unfavorable growing conditions, the remaining stocks of old potatoes may get wide distribution and prices should hold at a fairly high level.

The second-early States, shipping largely after mid-June, have an indicated commercial potato acreage 13 per cent greater than last season. Plantings in Arkansas may be double those of 1927; Oklahoma may increase its acreage by one-third, and New Jersey expects fully 31,500 acres. Other important mid-season States show little change from 1927.

The "spring rise" in prices of old potatoes came earlier than usual. Markets began to strengthen the first part of February and a sharp advance developed during the next few weeks, reaching its peak about mid-March. Slight declines then occurred, which the trade seemed disposed to regard as a short breathing spell, to be followed perhaps by further advances. Leading shipping points in all sections of the North and West reported few sales during late March; some growers who still had potatoes were inclined to hold for possible higher prices.

Car-lot movement continued rather heavy. The price level everywhere had advanced beyond last season's corresponding figure and the outlook for the spring market had radically changed within a few weeks' time.

#### HEAVIER ACREAGE TO BE PLANTED

Estimates based on a large number of reports from growers indicate probable total United States plantings of 3,923,000 acres of potatoes this year. Last season's total was around 3,500,000 and the preceding two years' about 3,100,000 acres.

The North Atlantic group as a whole expects about 10 per cent heavier plantings than in 1927. Pennsylvania and New York show greater percentage gains than other States in this group.

The North Central region has an indicated increase of nearly 14 per cent, with heavy gains in some of the important commercial areas.

South Atlantic States, from Delaware to Florida, show a probable increase of 12 per cent and the South Central group about 15 per cent more potato acreage than last year.

Western States expect a smaller gain than any other region, only 7 per cent, and in view of the relatively low prices received this season it is rather surprising that any increase is contemplated in the West. Washington, California, and Utah expect to reduce their potato acreage by 5 to 8 per cent, but this combined decrease is more than offset by proposed increases in other western States.

These March intentions, if carried out, would, with average conditions, result in a production of around 435,000,000 bushels. Such a production could hardly fail to bring about less favorable market conditions, perhaps as unfavorable as prevailed during the marketing of the 1922, 1923, and 1924 crops. The total potato crop last year was about 402,000,000 bushels, that of 1924 was nearly 422,000,000, and the 1922 production amounted to 453,000,000 bushels.

In the northern States east of the Mississippi River growers show intentions to increase the acreage about 11 per cent, and, with average weather conditions, yields per acre may be expected to be about 8 per cent higher than last season when the weather was quite unfavorable in most of the States of this group. The combination of these two possibilities would increase production about 20 per cent in these States. The yield per acre in most States west of the Mississippi is not likely to average as heavy as it was last season, but the intended increase in acreage in eastern States, with average growing conditions, is likely to make marketing of western potatoes more difficult next fall. Western growers, planning to increase production, must, therefore, do so with the prospect of reduced returns, due either to lower market prices under heavier competition or to the increased use of potatoes for stock feeding.

#### PRICES OF EARLY POTATOES LOWER

The spring crop of Bliss Triumph potatoes was beginning to move actively from Rio Grande Valley points at an opening price of \$5 per 100 pounds sacked, compared with \$6 to \$6.50 a year ago. Digging operations were starting in the Hastings section of Florida and shipments should soon be heavy. Louisiana potatoes are expected to be rolling in good volume by mid-April. Planting in the Orrick

district of Missouri, the Kaw Valley of Kansas, and the potato districts of Oklahoma and Arkansas was under way earlier than usual, and that entire region reports heavier acreage.

*Sweet potatoes.*—The sweet potato States also expect to plant more heavily than last season. Reports of growers' plans for 1928 indicate a total of 982,000 acres, or possibly 6 per cent more than in 1927. The 1926 sweet-potato plantings were 40,000 acres greater than those of the year before. A net gain of 112,000 acres occurred the following season, and now a further increase of 51,000 acres is in prospect. Slightly less acreage than last year is expected in New Jersey, Delaware, and Virginia, but a slight increase in Maryland. The North Central group has an indicated increase of 6 per cent over 1927, the South Atlantic States an increase of only 3 per cent, South Central region nearly 8 per cent more than last year, and western States no increase. A cut of 10 per cent is indicated for Louisiana.

The March intentions of sweet-potato growers, if carried out, would, with average yields, produce another large crop. If plantings are reduced below March intentions by about the same amount as in the past five years, the harvested acreage will be around 10 per cent less than in 1927. Such a reduced acreage would, with average yields, result in a crop which will likely bring improved marketing conditions and more satisfactory returns to growers.

The February and March price gains for sweet potatoes were well sustained. New Jersey yellow varieties were ranging \$2.25 to \$3 per bushel hamper in terminal markets, Maryland and Delaware stock brought \$2 to \$2.25, and southern Nancy Halls were jobbing at \$1.50 to \$1.85. General price level was about 50 per cent higher than a year ago. Holders for the late market evidently were in a position of advantage this spring.

*Onions.*—With a heavy crop of Texas Bermuda onions starting to market and imported stock arriving actively from Egypt, the season for northern storage stock will soon close. Old onions recently advanced to a level 10 or 20 per cent higher than last spring. Local reports indicate that the Egyptian crop available for export is considerably greater than that of 1927, and prices are higher as a result of the firm market in the United States. Possibly 4,000,000 bags of about 112 pounds each are available for shipment from Egypt. Quotations recently averaged \$3.65 per sack, delivered in Boston or New York, and jobbers in Boston were getting \$5.

During 1927 about 53,000,000 pounds of onions were imported from Egypt, 51,600,000 pounds from Spain, and over 4,000,000 from Chile. Nearly 12,000,000 pounds came from 22 other countries. Total imports of 120,600,000 pounds were about one-tenth of the total commercial onion production in the United States.

Onion plantings in six intermediate States are forecast at 7,630 acres, about the same as last season. Decreases in New Jersey, Virginia, and Washington are offset by double acreage in northern Texas.

*Cabbage.*—The Texas cabbage season was nearing an end at the encouragingly high f. o. b. range of \$35 to \$40 per ton, and shipments were getting under way in Alabama, Louisiana, and southern California. Timely rains improved the Texas crop, so that output became unexpectedly heavy and exceeded last season's final total of 5,600 cars. Plantings of spring cabbage in seven second-early States are estimated only slightly less than last year—21,930 acres.



A big decrease in Alabama offsets gains elsewhere. Fourteen intermediate States report an intended total of 23,300 acres, which would be but little more than in 1927, though greater than their plantings of any recent season. Acreage in Arkansas may be nearly doubled, Iowa expects heavier plantings, and so do Tennessee and New Jersey.

Old-crop cabbage advanced sharply during early March and then receded to about the closing price level of a year ago.

#### MANY STRAWBERRIES EXPECTED

Production of strawberries in five early States is forecast at 55,000,000 quarts, or nearly twice that of last season. The Florida crop is about 40 per cent lighter, but Texas may have double its 1927 crop, and Louisiana, with an expected total of 37,000,000 quarts, shows an increase of 120 per cent. Production in Alabama may be 9,000,000 quarts and in Mississippi about 2,000,000. Prices of Florida berries in city markets had declined to a jobbing range of 35 to 50 cents quart basis, but a temporary decrease of shipments caused an advance to a range of 35 to 90 cents. As soon as berries come in volume from other shipping sections prices may be expected to decline rapidly.

*Tomatoes.*—Tomatoes began moving at lower Rio Grande Valley points from an acreage 12 per cent greater than last year. Besides the 11,300 acres of tomatoes on the east coast of Florida, about 16,000 acres are planted in other parts of that State. This is a decrease of 2,500 from last season. Imperial Valley's tomato acreage is one-third less than in 1927. Six second-early States probably will have a total of 34,000 acres, compared with 31,160 last season. Mississippi, east Texas, and the Red River district show considerable gains.

*Other truck crops.*—Asparagus production for shipment from California may be increased this year to 1,373,000 crates, while Georgia and South Carolina together may have 500,000 crates. Early arrivals of California stock were jobbing in New York at \$6 to \$11 per crate of a dozen bunches, according to size of the asparagus.

Combined acreage of snap beans in Florida, Texas, and California is increased to 22,170 acres this season, two-thirds of the total being in Florida.

A 17 per cent reduction of cantaloupe plantings in Imperial Valley of California has resulted in approximately 33,000 acres there. A 100 per cent increase is reported in the small acreage of cantaloupes in the lower Rio Grande Valley, but no gains are indicated for Florida or Georgia.

Nine States shipping cucumbers during late winter and the spring report a total of 33,170 acres, which is slightly less than last year.

Watermelon plantings are increased somewhat in Florida and may show a 50 per cent gain in Imperial Valley.

PAUL FROELICH,  
*Division of Fruits and Vegetables, B. A. E.*

#### THE OUTLOOK FOR TOBACCO ACREAGE

An intended increase of approximately 16 per cent in the acreage of tobacco is reported. The heaviest increases are in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio. The intended increases in the cigar types appear warranted. The intended increases in most other types, particularly in flue-cured and burley, would probably result in supplies

large enough to materially change the supply situation of the past season.

*Flue cured.*—An intended increase of about 10.5 per cent in the acreage of flue-cured tobacco is reported, following an increase of 15 to 20 per cent last year. Allowing for necessary revisions in the 1927 acreage based on sales, this indicates intended plantings in 1928 in excess of 1,075,000 acres.

During the past two years the production of flue-cured tobacco has increased more rapidly than consumption, with the result that the stocks of old leaf are the highest on record. Cigarette consumption is increasing at the rate of about 9 per cent a year. Allowing for an increased consumption during the year ending July 1, 1928, it appears probable that the stocks of leaf on hand this date will be about 584,000,000 pounds, or 25 per cent greater than the stocks of July 1, 1927. An increase in acreage such as is indicated, with yields equal to the average of the past five years, would increase the potential supply of flue-cured tobacco on July 1, 1928, to approximately 1,306,000,000 pounds, compared with 1,184,000,000 on July 1, last.

A heavy increase in the acreage of burley, also a cigarette type, is intended, which if carried out, would have a further depressing effect on flue-cured in the coming season. In view of this, the contemplated increase in the southeastern States seems extremely unwise.

*Burley.*—The intended increase in burley acreage is 34 per cent. When burley is considered by itself this does not seem excessive in view of the probable reduction of stocks by the beginning of the next marketing season. When considered in connection with the indicated increase in flue-cured, the combined acreage of the two types would be excessive. With the indicated 1,075,000 acres of flue-cured and 353,000 acres of burley and yields equal to the average of the past five years, the combined production would be about 10 per cent larger than that of 1927. Present indications are that the combined stocks of burley and flue-cured are likely to be larger at the beginning of the next marketing season than they were the previous year. While some increase appears warranted, an increase of 34 per cent would probably result in an unfavorable supply situation and considerable low-grade tobacco because of plantings on the less suitable soils and inadequate housing and handling of the crop.

*Maryland.*—The intentions-to-plant report on Maryland tobacco shows a slight decrease in acreage. In view of increasing exports and an increasing domestic demand for this tobacco for cigarette purposes, an acreage equal to that of last year appears to be justified.

*One Sucker.*—An intended increase in acreage of 51 per cent is indicated by the growers of One-Sucker tobacco. This type is in a very strong position due to the depletion of old stocks and the very short crop of 1927. While a considerable increase is warranted by the present situation, an increase of 51 per cent would come very near to a return to the acreage of 1926, a year in which the prices were very unsatisfactory to the growers.

*Green River.*—The production of this type has fallen below consumption and the intended increase of 10 per cent seems entirely justified.

*Virginia sun cured.*—An increase of 20 per cent in acreage is intended. There has been no change in the rate of consumption of Virginia sun-cured tobacco that would warrant such an increase.



*Fire cured.*—An increase of 25.5 per cent in acreage is intended for this group as a whole, made up as follows: Virginia Dark, a decrease of 2 per cent; Clarksville and Hopkinsville, an increase of 21 per cent; Paducah, an increase of 47 per cent; and Henderson, an increase of 11 per cent.

The relation between present supplies and the trend of consumption of the Kentucky-Tennessee fire-cured types is favorable to some increase in acreage, but the intended increase seems rather large when the situation is viewed from all angles. The decrease in acreage in recent years, the short crop of 1927 which was partially caused by a low yield, and the heavy purchases by Spain recently have resulted in lower stocks. Growers have, no doubt, been stimulated to the proposed increase in acreage by the higher prices paid for the 1927 crop. It should be borne in mind, however, that these prices were brought about not only by a short crop but were also due to the desirable quality of the tobacco. Overplanting would probably result in the production of an excess of inferior quality tobacco through lack of proper attention. In the face of an apparently decreasing export demand for fire-cured tobacco, growers would do well to exercise more caution than is indicated in the intentions-to-plant report.

(From report of this bureau, issued March 22, 1928.)

#### LOSSES IN FARM POPULATION

The movement of population from farms to cities and from cities to farms is an index of the relative economic and social condition of agriculture which can not longer be overlooked. It is unfortunate that our information upon this point does not go further back in years and decades and that what information we have is so limited in character. What we do know, however, is sufficient to extend the problem of a stable and permanent agriculture beyond the factors of relative production and price to include the factors of relative consumption and standard of living of farmers.

The annual movement in recent years of approximately 2,000,000 of persons from farms to cities and the return movement from cities to farms of considerably more than 1,000,000 persons constitutes a social phenomenon which excites scientific curiosity. Only a little careful consideration discovers four constant streams of persons away from farms, each stream following its own stream bed: There is the stream of young adults, male and female, just ready for occupational careers; the stream of older adults, still vigorous in body and mind, seeking more favorable economic returns than their farming affords; the stream of prosperous adults of middle age who seek in cities a standard of consumption not possible on farms, even with satisfactory incomes; the stream of adults who through the disabilities of age and heavy work make their retreat from farming.

Leaving out of account foreign immigration—a somewhat different factor—there are evident three return streams from cities to farms which probably are fairly constant: A small stream of persons seeking health in country work and living conditions; a small stream of city-bred persons who have a land-love complex; a large stream of farm-bred persons who through intimacy with city life become disillusioned in regard to the opportunities of city work and the delights of city streets.

Now the outstanding fact of the movements of the last seven years is that some of these stream beds have contained rising streams, possibly overflowing the banks. Hard times for agriculture have swollen the cityward stream of young adults and the stream of older adults seeking better economic conditions, and possibly have shrunk the stream of the disabled and of the prosperous seeking better living conditions. That there should be a large stream of disillusioned farmers back to the land in these years is not to be wondered at, for adjustment to city occupations and manner of life is a process attended by severe dislocation of personal and family habits.

In the balance of the seven-year movement of population, taking into account arrivals by birth and departures by death, that the farm population should be a continual loser is more or less a national surprise. No one was quite prepared to see the efficiency of agriculture more than keep pace with the growth of population in cities and hand cities a present of all its natural farm population increase to boot.

This net loss of farm population year by year for the past seven years—in itself a startling phenomenon—does not lose any of its problematic character when an analysis of the census figures for “rural population” during the past 50 years convinces us that in all probability the farm population began a net decrease in certain eastern States 40 years ago, in certain mid-west States 30 years ago, in rather strong mid-west States 20 years ago; in fact, that net decreases took place in the farm population of States with the best land in years of prosperity and in times of a rising farm tenancy.

We are warned that it is necessary to understand what is happening to the structure of our farm population through the play of the social and economic forces at work through fat years for agriculture as well as through lean years. It may turn out to be that the stream bed which is conducting to cities those who achieve a competence in farming and desire a higher standard of consumption than farm communities have learned to provide is really a leakage of farm leadership which is well-nigh irreparable. Stopping this leak, if possible, by turning some attention to consumption, is a logical lesson from the history of losses of farm population up to date.

## I

## MOVEMENTS TO AND FROM FARMS

[Births and deaths not taken into account]

During year	Persons leaving farms for cities	Persons arriving at farms and cities	Net movement from farms to cities
1922-----	<sup>1</sup> 2, 000, 000	<sup>1</sup> 880, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 120, 000
1923-----	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
1924-----	<sup>1</sup> 2, 075, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 396, 000	<sup>1</sup> 679, 000
1925-----	<sup>1</sup> 1, 900, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 066, 000	<sup>1</sup> 834, 000
1926-----	<sup>1</sup> 2, 155, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 135, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 020, 000
1927-----	<sup>1</sup> 1, 978, 000	<sup>1</sup> 1, 374, 000	<sup>1</sup> 604, 000

<sup>1</sup> Estimated.

<sup>2</sup> No estimate.

## II

## FARM POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Year	Number
Jan. 1, 1910-----	32,076,960 (estimated, U. S. Census).
Jan. 1, 1920-----	31,614,269 (enumerated, U. S. Census). <sup>1</sup>
	31,000,000 (estimated). <sup>2</sup>
Jan. 1, 1921-----	30,600,000 (estimated). <sup>3</sup>
Jan. 1, 1922-----	30,200,000 (estimated). <sup>3</sup>
Jan. 1, 1923-----	29,800,000 (estimated). <sup>3</sup>
Jan. 1, 1924-----	29,400,000 (estimated). <sup>3</sup>
Jan. 1, 1925-----	28,981,668 (enumerated, U. S. Census).
Jan. 1, 1926-----	28,541,000 (estimated).
Jan. 1, 1927-----	27,892,000 (estimated).
Jan. 1, 1928-----	27,699,000 (estimated).

<sup>1</sup> This number, 31,614,269, includes all persons living on farms and also the members of farm laborers' families living in the country but not on farms.

<sup>2</sup> In order to make the number of farm population of 1920 comparable with that of 1925, the above-mentioned members of farm laborers' families (estimated at 614,269 persons) are subtracted.

<sup>3</sup> The loss of farm population between 1920 and 1925, calculated as the difference between 31,000,000 and 29,000,000 (round numbers), was averaged for the five years at 400,000 per year, and so the farm population for this year was obtained by subtracting 400,000 from the farm population of the previous year.

## III

## RECENT LOSSES IN FARM POPULATION

During period or calendar year	Net loss of farm population in United States <sup>1</sup>
1910-1920-----	463,000 (estimated).
1920-1925-----	2,000,000 (from U. S. Census enumerations).
1925-----	441,000 (estimated).
1926-----	649,000 (estimated).
1927-----	193,000 (estimated).

<sup>1</sup> Net loss is number of persons leaving farms for cities added to number of persons who died, and from this sum is taken number of persons going to farms from cities added to number of births.

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